



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

June 4, 1999

S. 323

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on
May 19, 1999*

SUMMARY

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 323 would cost the federal government \$5.5 million over the next five years. The bill would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. S. 323 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BILL'S MAJOR PROVISIONS

S. 323 would redesignate the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument in Colorado as the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. The bill would direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer jurisdiction over about 7,000 acres adjacent to the existing national monument from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the National Park Service (NPS) for incorporation into the new park. Subject to existing rights, all federal acreage within the park, including that transferred from the BLM, would be withdrawn from entry, appropriation, and disposal under public land and mining laws, and thus could not be sold, leased, or otherwise used for commercial purposes. (Grazing within the park, however, would continue until existing permits expire.)

Section 5 of the bill would authorize the NPS to acquire up to approximately 2,500 additional acres for the park by donation, purchase, transfer, or exchange. The NPS would revise the boundaries of the park once it acquires such lands and would conduct an official boundary survey of the park as soon as possible thereafter. Section 6 would expand the Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness to include an additional 4,419 acres of land. This

section also would direct the NPS to administer the Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness as a component of the park.

S. 323 also would establish the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA). Section 7 would direct the BLM to administer the 57,725-acre NCA in accordance with this bill, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and other applicable laws. Lands within the NCA would be withdrawn from entry, appropriation, and disposal under public land and mining laws. This section would require the BLM to develop a comprehensive plan for protection and management of the NCA. If the agency acquires land for the NCA (as it may under existing authority), it would revise the area's boundaries accordingly. Also, section 8 would designate about 17,700 acres of land within the NCA as the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness. Section 9 also would protect other BLM lands outside of the NCA by withdrawing them under public land and mining laws.

Section 11 would require the NPS to conduct a study of the areas adjacent to the Curecanti National Recreation Area in order to assess resources and identify alternatives to protect them. This section would permit the NPS to acquire two tracts of land for inclusion in the NRA before the land protection study is completed.

Finally, section 12 would authorize the appropriation of whatever amounts are necessary to implement the legislation.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CBO estimates that the NPS and the BLM would spend a total of about \$1 million to complete the studies and plans required by S. 323 over the next three or four years. In addition, we estimate that the NPS would spend about \$3 million to acquire land at Black Canyon and Curecanti. (BLM may also acquire land for the NCA, but the agency already has authority to acquire property in this area under other statutes.) CBO estimates that the cost of developing property acquired at the two park units would not exceed \$1.5 million in total. We estimate that additional annual expenses to operate the NCA and the two park units once the bill has been implemented would not be significant. All estimates are based on information provided by the NPS and the BLM. For purposes of these estimates, CBO assumes that the necessary amounts would be appropriated as required.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS: None.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 323 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

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